

December 4-5, 2008

Updating payments for physician services

ISSUE: In the March 2009 report, the Commission will analyze payment adequacy and payment updates for physicians services. We will also discuss trends in ambulatory surgical centers.

KEY POINTS: We examine several factors to determine whether Medicare payments for physician services are adequate. These include beneficiary access to physician services, private insurer rates compared to Medicare rates, and volume growth. In our analysis, we also examine how costs are likely to change in 2010. Additionally, we will consider payment options for the practice expense portion of advanced imaging services that are conducted with expensive equipment. Finally, we will examine trends in ambulatory surgical centers and discuss possible payment policy recommendations.

ACTION: Commissioners should review the findings in preparation for making payment recommendations to Congress.

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